

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Heating-Related Fires Increase During Cold Temperatures **CAL FIRE Asks Homeowners to be Safe with Heating Equipment**

Sacramento – The recent cold-snap is a clear sign that winter has arrived in California with many areas receiving rain and snow over the weekend. During the cold winter months, CAL FIRE and fire departments across the nation see an increase in home fires due to dangerous heating equipment or unsafe practices. Improper use or poorly maintained heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fires and home fire deaths across the country.

“Half of all home heating fires are reported during the months of December, January and February,” said State Fire Marshal Tonya Hoover, CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal. “Improper use or poorly maintained heating equipment often leads to fires, injuries and deaths that could have been easily prevented. These fires remind us once again how important having working smoke alarms can be.”

With a few simple safety tips and precautions, you can prevent most home heating fires from happening.

CAL FIRE offers the following fire safety tips:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment such as a furnace, fireplace, wood stove or portable space heater.
- Have a 3-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.
- Always turn portable heaters off when leaving a room or going to bed.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to prevent sparks from escaping.
- Allow fireplace ashes to completely cool before disposing them. Place in a tightly covered metal container at least 10 feet away from your home and any other nearby buildings. NEVER empty fireplace or wood stove ashes directly into a trash can.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- If using fossil fuel heating, install and maintain carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. Make sure your home has working smoke alarms as well.

For more information on safe home heating visit the CAL FIRE website at www.fire.ca.gov.